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Officials Fear C.I.A. Work Was Hurt by Disclosures

Officials active in United States intelligence operations have expressed the fear that some of their most effective weapons have been blunted by disclosures of the secret financial support provided by the Central Intelligence Agency to other groups.

These officials, in this country and abroad, argued in defense of the controversial C.I.A. programs, saying the funds involved amounted to "only a fraction" of investments by Communist nations in covert attempts to penetrate Western and neutralist governments.

An intricate web of undercover political activities and propaganda by American intelligence has been exposed to public view since disclosure last month of the agency's financial support for the National Student Association.

Can't Respond Publicly

While the American intelligence community has been unable to respond publicly to the resulting criticism, New York Times correspondents in various capitals interviewed United States officials and other qualified people who are not normally available to be questioned. The following main points emerged:

A struggle through subversion and influence-seeking continues unabated—particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America—although East-West tensions on the high political level have diminished and the original cold war battleground—Europe—has stabilized.

Whether the tactics involve

dollar payments to a South American labor union threatened by Communist take-over or Communist rifles smuggled to rebellious Kurdish tribesmen in cases marked "sewing machines," this is a battle to influence and penetrate foreign countries, the sources said.

United States aid to student and youth groups around the world has been effectively halted by the disclosures. No delegation of non-Communist American youths is expected to attend the next World Youth Festival in Sofia, Bulgaria, next year. At previous festivals, in Vienna and Helsinki, American students, secretly financed by the C.I.A., prevented Communist delegations from speaking unchallenged.

American intelligence officials are dismayed at what they consider unjustified criticism of covert political activities and frustrated over security requirements that prevent them from replying openly. They see a sense of false security in this country—what one official called "a misunderstanding of the arena of conflict."

Hungarian Defector Speaks

One man who could speak out was Laszlo Szabo, a former major in the Hungarian intelligence service who defected to the United States in 1965. He expressed amazement at the "naive" attitude of Americans about propaganda.

"It is the big front in the secret war," he said.

Some American intelligence officials were willing to be quoted directly on their views and on their information supporting these conclusions, although their names and positions cannot be given.

One of these sources summed up the American intelligence community's feeling about covert political action this way: "If a little money was put into a free labor union or other institution in a precarious country to keep it alive under adverse circumstances, it was worth it."

"The big purpose is, and was, pre-emptive—to prevent the Communists from taking over. In this way we have succeeded in many cases in avoiding confrontations that might have been far more costly and difficult if the Communist-bloc efforts had prevailed."

All the intelligence officers interviewed said they strongly believed that clandestine financial support for certain private organizations should continue, except in fields where the support has been exposed.

This view has run into strong opposition in the United States Government. Vice President Humphrey said the student-financing programs represented "one of the saddest times, in reference to public policy, our Government has had."

Some observers have pointed out that much of the support for international activities could have been given overtly, by Government agencies other than the C.I.A. Suspicion of espionage motivations, these people believe, could thus have been avoided.

Defenders of the C.I.A. view say such opinions reflect a poor grasp of the nature of modern intelligence.

"There are not that many secrets," one American official said. "The major thrust of Soviet officials is not collecting information—though they certainly do that as well—but in exerting influence."

"So we, too, are in the influence business."

Recent defectors from Communist intelligence services

have confirmed that the basic motivation of covert Communist activity in the West is not to steal documents but to disseminate propaganda and carry on "relentlessly political" activity.

"You Americans simply do not understand that," said Wladyslaw Tykocinski, former chief of the Polish military mission in West Berlin. Mr. Tykocinski, 43 years old, was interviewed in Washington, where he now lives after defecting in May, 1965. He said he was "angry" that the covert subsidy programs were "so stupidly managed."

"In the East we have no such problems," he said. "The orders are given in Moscow and the money is there. Moscow says, 'Pay for this,' and it is paid."

He discussed the strategy of Communist intelligence services in the West.

"It is not the recruiting of spies—that is quite easy," he said. "The whole thing is political—everything should show that world opinion is supporting Communism."

"You are always looking here at home for Communists. But they—the real Communists of the intelligence apparatus—don't want Communists. They

want citizens with money and influence. They want aristocrats and opinion-makers."

"They flatter the intellectuals and the non-Communist left and they get them to do the work. They don't want them as Communist party members but as stooges who have entree in society."

"To prove to the world that you are saving the world and that you are the wave of the future, you need respectable people—not workers, but students, churchmen, professors and doctors."

The Battle for Influence

This is the battle for influence that the intelligence officers say the general public does not understand.

Officials point to world press reaction as an indication of the crippling of United States covert political activities.

The Cairo newspaper Al Ahram said: "It is the right of people of liberated countries to be more vigilant in dealing with the organizations and groupings whose connections with the C.I.A. have been revealed."

Radio listeners in Rumania heard Government reports that "a number of young people, both from the United States and other countries, came under po-

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